

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 DRC-01 /088 W
----- 034973

R 182040Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3608

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, JM, ILO

SUBJ: LOCAL UNIONS APPEAL TO ILO

REF: KINGSTON 4097*

1. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, EIGHT MINOR JAMAICAN TRADE UNIONS HAVE APPEALED TO THE ILO TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT THE JAMAICAN PARLIAMENT FROM PASSING CONTROVERSIAL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND PUBLIC SERVICE ACTS. THE UNIONS ARGUE THAT THE DRAFT LAWS VIOLATE TWO MAJOR ILO CONVENTIONS AS WELL AS THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY ALSO CLAIM THAT THE ACTS WOULD BE EXTREMELY OPPRESSIVE AGAINST WORKERS AS WORKERS COULD BE IMPRISONED FOR DISOBEYING BACK-TO-WORK ORDERS ISSUED BY THE MINISTER OF LABOR AND THEY WOULD GIVE THE MINISTER UNDUE POWERS TO DETERMINE WHICH INDUSTRIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

2. ALTHOUGH LABOR LEGISLATION HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE GOVT'S PLATFORM SINCE THE 1972 GENERAL ELECTION, THE PM, AS THE HEAD OF THE NATION'S LARGEST TRADE UNION, HAS BEEN HESITANT TO PUSH TOO FAST - THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO SUCH LEGISLATION EVEN WITHIN HIS OWN UNION (NATIONAL WORKERS UNION). MANLEY

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LATION EVEN WITHIN HIS OWN UNION (NATIONAL WORKERS UNION). MANLEY

WAS AROUSED TO ACTION, HOWEVER, / THE DEC 1-2
STRIKE (REFTEL) AT THE JAMAICA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY WHICH
LEFT LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE ISLAND WITHOUT POWER FOR PERIODS
RANGING UP TO 24 HOURS. REACTING TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS
"IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR" ON THE PART OF SEVERAL SUPER-
VISORY PERSONNEL, THE PM ANNOUNCED ON TELEVISION HIS INTENTION
TO PUSH FORWARD WITH THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION, THUS
INVITING THE CRITICISM OF THE ENTIRE JAMAICAN LABOR MOVEMENT,
EXCEPT FOR THE NWU, WHICH HAS GIVEN THE LEGISLATION ITS QUALIFIED
AND RELUCTANT SUPPORT.

3. WHILE THE PM APPEARS DETERMINED TO ENACT LABOR LEGISLATION EARLY
IN THE NEW YEAR, WITH BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES STRONGLY BASED ON
THE JAMAICAN LABOR MOVEMENT, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WILL BE
SUCCESSFUL OR THAT THE LEGISLATION, EVEN IF PASSED BY PARLI-
AMENT, WILL HAVE THE TEETH NECESSARY TO MEET THE PROBLEMS FACED
BY GOVERNMENT IN TRYING TO KEEP ESSENTIAL SERVICES OPERATING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, LABOR RELATIONS, LABOR LAW, LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KINGST04304
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731219/aaaaanrd.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: KINGSTON 4097
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hilburpw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <31-Jan-2002 by hilburpw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LOCAL UNIONS APPEAL TO ILO
TAGS: ELAB, JM, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005